



State of Mississippi Judiciary

Administrative Office of Courts



Frequently Asked Questions

Media

Are records of state trial courts available online?

The Mississippi Electronic Courts ([MEC](#)) pilot project is underway. Chancery Courts in Madison, Warren and Scott counties utilize electronic filing. Circuit Courts of Madison and Warren counties and the County Court of Madison County utilize e-filing in civil cases. Work is underway to implement e-filing in the Chancery Courts of DeSoto, Harrison, Holmes and Yazoo counties. Public access to those records is available through the Public Access Mississippi Electronic Case Management system, PAMEC. It is hoped that the pilot project can be expanded to additional jurisdictions.

Are dockets of state trial courts available online?

Some, but not all of the state trial courts and clerks of courts maintain their own web site, share a page on a county web site, or provide web access through a private vendor. Some of those who maintain an Internet presence also provide court calendar and docket information.

Are records of the Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals available via the Internet?

Some records are available only as paper copies at the office of the Supreme Court Clerk. A searchable database of [opinions](#) of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals dating back to 1996 is available on this web site. Orders of the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals filed on or after Sept. 25, 2008, can be viewed via links to the [General Docket](#). The weekly hand down lists of both courts are available on this web site. The Mississippi College School of Law maintains an [online briefs archive](#).

Are decisions handed down at particular intervals by the Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals?

The Mississippi Court of Appeals makes its decisions public on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m., excluding state holidays. The Mississippi Supreme Court makes its decisions public on Thursdays at 1:30 p.m., excluding state holidays. Special hand downs may occasionally be made on other days. The Courts may also take action by administrative or procedural orders which are not on the weekly hand down list.

Do the Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals provide Internet access to oral arguments?

Yes. The Supreme Court and Court of Appeals have broadcast their oral arguments via the Internet since 2001. Supreme Court oral arguments are viewable in real time [here](#). Court of Appeals oral arguments are viewable in real time [here](#). The Mississippi College School of Law provides an [archive](#) of oral arguments.

How does one find information about the status of a case on appeal?

The Internet accessible [General Docket](#) of the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals provides a docket entry noting each filing, order and opinion in each case. The docket is searchable by party name, attorney name, and case number.

How does one obtain access to appellate court records which are not available via the Internet?

The Clerk of the Mississippi Supreme Court maintains the case files of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Records may be viewed in the office of the Clerk or copied. The staff of the office of the Supreme Court Clerk may require advance notice of a request to view or copy a file. The Clerk's telephone number is 601-359-3694.

Due to limited space in the office of the Supreme Court Clerk, older files are transferred to the state Department of Archives and History. Those records should be obtained directly from Archives and History.

How much do copies cost?

A list of copy fees is available at the [Supreme Court Clerk's](#) site.

Is a written public records request required to obtain access to a court file?

Most requests to view or copy public files in individual cases may be made verbally. Attorneys and the general public should contact the office of the Supreme Court Clerk at 601-359-3694. Members of the media may contact the court Public Information Officer at 601-576-4637.

What is the Supreme Court's public records policy?

The Supreme Court's public records policy is addressed in detail in the Statement of Policy Regarding Openness and Availability of Public Records. View the policy [here](#).

Are statistics available regarding case filings and dispositions?

The Mississippi Supreme Court produces an Annual Report which includes basic statistics regarding case activity in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit, Chancery and County courts. Annual reports are available [here](#).

When will the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals make a decision in a particular case?

By statute and court rule, Mississippi appellate courts are to render a decision within 270 days of the filing of the final brief in a case.

What is the media required to do to be able to photograph or videotape a court proceeding?

The [Mississippi Rules for Electronic and Photographic Coverage of Judicial Proceedings](#) require that media representatives who wish to engage in electronic coverage of a judicial proceeding shall notify the clerk of the court and the court administrator at least 48 hours prior to the

commencement of the proceedings. Notification may be done by filing a Camera Coverage Notice, a copy of which is available on this web site under [FORMS](#).

Are cameras or electronic recording devices permitted in the courtroom during jury selection?

No. The Rules for Electronic and Photographic Coverage of Judicial Proceedings prohibit photographing, videotaping or recording prospective jurors or serving jurors inside or outside the courtroom until they are finally discharged from their jury service. Camera coverage is prohibited inside the courtroom during jury selection. During voir dire, no broadcast equipment or still camera will be brought into the courtroom. Reporters may attend jury selection, but are not permitted to take pictures or make audio or video recordings inside the courtroom.

Are there limitations or prohibitions for camera coverage of certain courts, proceedings and kinds of witnesses?

Yes. Electronic or still camera coverage is permitted, with limitations, in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit, Chancery and County Courts. The rules do not authorize camera coverage of Justice Court and Municipal Court hearings. Electronic or still camera coverage is expressly prohibited unless the presiding justice or judge shall allow the coverage by order in matters of divorce, child custody, support, guardianship, conservatorship, commitment, waiver of parental consent to abortion, adoption, delinquency and neglect of minors, determination of paternity, termination of parental rights, domestic abuse, motions to suppress evidence, proceedings involving trade secrets, and in camera proceedings. Electronic or still camera coverage is expressly prohibited of witnesses who are minors, police informants, undercover agents, relocated witnesses, victims and families of victims of sex crimes, and victims of domestic abuse.

Are there other limitations on camera equipment?

Yes. The presiding judge may require members of the media to utilize a pool camera arrangement, but the judge may waive the pool requirement. Flash photography is prohibited. No artificial lighting may be used unless specifically authorized by the presiding judge. Broadcast equipment and still cameras shall be placed at a location identified by the judge to be minimally intrusive to the proceedings, and shall be placed or relocated only before proceedings commence, during recesses, or after proceedings conclude. All wires and cables must be taped securely to the floor.

Where is a copy of the camera coverage rules?

The Rules for Electronic and Photographic Coverage of Judicial Proceedings are available on the RULES page [here](#).

Where can one find contact information for attorneys?

The Mississippi Supreme Court [bar roll](#) is available on this web site. The Mississippi Bar also maintains a [directory](#).

Is there a source to help locate a law professor to talk about a particular topic?

The web sites of the [Mississippi College School of Law](#) and the [University of Mississippi School of Law](#) have faculty directories which include subject areas.

Is there a directory of judges which provides titles and correct spellings of names?

Yes. The Secretary of State's office annually publishes a [Judiciary Directory](#) and Court Calendar. If you know the court on which the particular judge serves, quicker access to information is under the drop-down menus for "Appellate Courts" and "Trial Courts" on the home page of this web site.

Is a glossary or dictionary of legal terms available online?

There are numerous online legal resources. The Mississippi Bar has a [Guide to Legalese](#) on its web site.

How can one find a copy of a current Mississippi statute?

The searchable online [Mississippi Code](#) is available via a link from this web site.

How can one find information about a statute on a particular subject as it existed at some time in the past?

The State Library has copies of all editions of the Mississippi Code, past and present, and has a large collection of legal reference materials. The law library staff will assist patrons in understanding the organization of the library and how to use the books in the library's collection. The law library is located in the new Carroll Gartin Justice Building at 450 High Street and is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Is the State Library collection searchable via the Internet?

Only the [catalog](#) of the collection is available online. The actual materials must be viewed in the State Library. For a fee, the reference department of the State Library will work with you to provide copies of materials through facsimile. The library staff will not read the text of any material over the telephone. Here are [fee details](#).

How can one find copies of court decisions issued by the Mississippi appellate courts, appellate courts of other states or the federal courts?

The searchable [decisions](#) of the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, including cases decided since 1996, are available on this site.

The State Library provides public access to computerized legal research for Mississippi cases as well as other state and federal case law. A public access computer terminal for legal research is available in the Law Library. The only charge is the price of copying. Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, the federal appellate courts and some federal district courts are available on the Internet via the [PACER](#) system.

How does one look up a Mississippi court rule?

Mississippi court rules are available on this web site under [RULES](#).

How are Mississippi judges selected, and how long are their terms of office?

Justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals are elected to eight-year terms in non-

partisan elections. Elections are concurrent with the regular election for representatives in Congress, and are staggered so that not all of the justices or judges from each appellate court come up for election at one time.

Judges of the Circuit, Chancery and County courts are elected to four-year terms in non-partisan elections. Trial court elections are concurrent with the regular election for representatives in Congress. All Circuit, Chancery and County court judges run for office during the same election cycle.

Justice court judges are elected to four-year terms in partisan elections. Justice court races occur during the election cycle for statewide offices and local county government offices.

Municipal judges are appointed by municipal governing authorities to terms determined by those governing authorities.

How are judicial vacancies filled?

Judges of the trial and appellate courts are elected. When a vacancy occurs due to illness, death or resignation on the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit, Chancery or County court, the Governor makes an appointment to fill the judicial vacancy according to the provisions of Mississippi Code Section 9-1-101, Section 9-1-103, and Section 23-15-849. Mississippi Code Section 23-15-849 states that appointees to the Circuit, Chancery and County courts serve until the “next regular election for state officers or for representatives in Congress occurring more than nine (9) months after the existence of the vacancy to be filled....” In the appellate courts, Mississippi Code Section 23-15-849 states that if less than half of the term remains, the appointee serves out the term, but if half or more than half of the term remains, the appointee serves until a special election is held. The statute says the election is to be held “at the next regular election for state officers or for representatives in Congress occurring more than nine (9) months after the existence of the vacancy to be filled....”

Vacancies on the Justice courts are filled by appointment of a person selected by the local board of supervisors, according to Mississippi Code Section 9-11-31.

Vacancies on the Municipal courts are filled by appointment of a person selected by the municipal governing authority, according to Mississippi Code Section 21-23-9.

What happens when a judge of the Circuit, Chancery or County court is unable to hear a case or is temporarily unable to carry out judicial duties?

If the case or cases cannot be assigned to another judge within the district, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court may appoint a special judge. Mississippi Code Section 9-1-105 (1) states, in part, “Whenever any judicial officer is unwilling or unable to hear a case or unable to hold or attend any of the courts at the time and place required by law by reason of the physical disability or sickness of such judicial officer, by reason of the absence of such judicial officer from the state, by reason of the disqualification of such judicial officer pursuant to the provision of Section 165, Mississippi Constitution of 1890, or any provision of the Code of Judicial Conduct, or for any other reason, the Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, with the advice and consent of a majority of the justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court, may appoint a person as a special judge to hear the case or attend and hold a court.”

Who may serve as a special judge to hear cases in Circuit, Chancery or County courts?

Mississippi Code Section 9-1-105 (6) says, “A person appointed to serve as a special judge may be any currently sitting or retired chancery, circuit or county court judge, Court of Appeals judge or Supreme Court Justice, or any other person possessing the qualifications of the judicial office for which the appointment is made; provided, however, that a judge or justice who was retired from service at the polls shall not be eligible for appointment as a special judge in the district in which he served prior to his defeat.”

Rev. 07/14/2011